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DENVER'S PAPERS LOSE 3 LEADERS

Field Ruled for 25 Years by
Foster, Hoyt and Cervi

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DENVER, Jan. 16 — Three men who dominated Denver newspapering for a quarter of a century have retired or died in the last few weeks, bringing on a widespread series of management changes.

Jack Foster, 64 years old, retired Dec. 31 after 30 years as editor of The Morning Rocky Mountain News, a tabloid that is part of the Scripps-Howard Newspapers chain. He was replaced by the paper's former managing editor, Vincent M. Dwyer, 58.

E. Palmer Hoyt, 73, editor and publisher of The Denver Post for almost 25 years, retired Jan. 1 and was replaced by Charles R. Buxton, 57, who had been The Post's general manager.

Eugene S. Cervi, 64, founder of the muckraking weekly business newspaper, Cervi's Rocky Mountain Journal, died of a heart attack Dec. 15. Mr. Cervi had been in ill health for more than a year and had turned over the job of editor and publisher to his daughter, Mary Claire, 35.

All three men had a strong impact on Denver journalism.

Mr. Foster took over The Rocky Mountain News in 1949 when Scripps-Howard was ready to close it down. Its circulation was only 33,000 daily, compared with 167,000 daily at The Post. Today, the circulation is 203,000 at The News, compared with 260,000 at The Post. The Post has a commanding lead in Sunday circulation, 350,000 to 225,000.

Last week, The News announced that Michael B. Howard, former city editor of the paper, had been appointed to succeed Mr. Dwyer as managing editor. Mr. Howard, 28, is the son of Jack R. Howard, president and general editorial manager of Scripps-Howard.

At The Denver Post, Mr. Hoyt brought respectability and a national reputation to a newspaper that had had a rough and rowdy beginning. One of its founders, for example, F. W. Bonfils, who died in 1933, was once called a "rattlesnake," a "public enemy" and a "contemptible dog" by the state chairman of the Democratic party.

Mr. Hoyt's replacement, Mr. Buxton, will have less power in the affairs of the newspaper. William Hornby was named executive editor of The Post and John Rogers managing editor.

The Post's management has been fighting efforts by Samuel I. Newhouse, New York publisher, to take over the newspaper. Mr. Newhouse is a minority stockholder and recently won a lawsuit in Federal District Court forcing the paper to auction publicly a block of its stock. The Post management has appealed the decision.

On Dec. 14, former Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey, former United Nations Representative Arthur J. Goldberg and Gov. John A. Love of Colorado headed a gathering of 400 guests at the Brown Palace Hotel to honor Mr. Hoyt.

Mr. Cervi's was one of the most outspoken voices in American journalism.

In announcing the appointment of Mr. Buxton last September, Mr. Cervi said that "when a person becomes editor and publisher of The Denver Post, that person automatically becomes a significantly powerful factor in public opinion-making in these mountain states."

Then he added, in his characteristic style:

"He also becomes the hired, well-paid, nonowning custodian of all the policies, trade practices, functionary purposes and subtle blackmailing techniques and other vested privileges rooted in illegality and immorality that systematically go with monopolies in which great effort must be made to conceal evils."

His thoughts were kinder toward the new managing editor of The Rocky Mountain News, whom he called, "a new and bright young force."

"Until he shows other colors, young Howard has to be seen as decent and idealistic while effectively improving the craftsmanship at the morning newspaper," Mr. Cervi wrote.

The Denver Post, in commenting on his death, said that "much of what Cervi said about us over the years seems to us to be unfair, inaccurate or downright wrong."

"But he was a lively, provocative, intelligent, colorful and tempestuous man who brought vitality and excitement to Denver journalism."

Tom Gavin, a Denver Post columnist, said that Mr. Cervi was often wrong.

"But about seven times in 10, he was right," he said, "searingly, piercingly, abrasively right."

"And, listen, it's good for a community and for a community's so-called leaders — yes, and for its newspapers, too — to know that out there somewhere is somebody ready to shout and point and jump up and down in outrage when bum decisions are made."

"The harpooner is seldom cherished by the whales . . . and so Gene Cervi was not universally loved."

Mr. Cervi's Journal has a weekly circulation of 10,000 and lists all real estate transactions in the Denver area, trust deeds, building permits, new businesses, bankruptcies, car sales, tax liens and construction projects soliciting bids.

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